



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT: MILISSA REIERSON
615.741.2257 (OFFICE)
615.308.3705 (CELL)

Disaster Unemployment Assistance available for Shelby County storm victims *President grants declaration*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) benefits are available to workers in Shelby County as a direct result of severe storms producing hurricane force winds and heavy rain that occurred July 21-22, 2003, Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development, James Neeley reported.

"This is a very difficult time for area residents, and we want to make sure that workers who have lost their jobs and are eligible for benefits receive their checks as quickly as possible," Neeley said. "Any workers who feel they may be eligible for benefits should go immediately to their local Labor and Workforce Development office to register for DUA."

Benefits will be paid under provision of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, which became available when President Bush granted a Presidential Disaster Declaration in Tennessee at Governor Bredesen's request.

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development administers the program on behalf of the federal government. According to Neeley, person's unemployed, as a direct result of these severe storms must file their claim for DUA **benefits within 30 days of this announcement.**

"Individuals who are not covered for regular unemployment benefits may qualify for disaster unemployment benefits," Neeley explained. "This includes self-employed workers and others not covered by the state unemployment insurance program whose source of income has been interrupted by the severe storm damage."

Individuals should take with them to the local office income tax returns for 2002, a social security number and any papers with wage and employment information prior to the disaster.

Weekly DUA benefit amounts are determined in the same way as regular unemployment benefits. Benefits range from \$105 to \$275 per week and are payable up to 26 weeks after the day of declaration, which was July 29, 2003. DUA benefits will end if unemployment is no longer caused by these severe storms. Staff at the local Labor and Workforce Development offices will also provide re-employment assistance.

(more)

Persons who are unemployed should contact one of the Shelby County Labor and Workforce Development offices listed below:

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|---------------------------------|---------------|
| 2745 S. Mendenhall Rd., Memphis | (901)543-7831 |
| 1285 Poplar, Memphis | (901)543-7818 |
| 2850 Austin Peay Hwy, Memphis | (901)543-7842 |
| 942 West Poplar, Collierville | (901)853-4752 |

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